

THE REFORMER.

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Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth. Jeremiah v. 1.

FREE THINKING CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

A wish having been expressed by several of our correspondents, to learn something further concerning the "Free Thinking Christian Church," some account of which was given in our May number, we shall make a few more extracts from their Magazine, exemplifying their sentiments and practice. They have certainly taken a bold stand, and are an interesting people. One feature which peculiarly distinguishes them, is discarding all *Pulpit Preaching*, or the existence of any order of men exclusively to be teachers, considering that every Christian has an equal right to speak, and to give instruction. Their ideas on this subject will be best expressed in their own words:

"All the men in the world cannot tell us more of Christianity than is contained in the New Testament, and if, as a *hireling preacher*, Mr. Belsham, has said 'the Christian doctrine is so plainly revealed in it, that no *honest* inquirer can greatly mistake,' those at least who are in possession of that book, have no need of stated teachers. But it may be said, that there are thousands who have not that book, or if they had, would not read it; but what has this to do with stated preachers, who preach only to those who profess to believe in Christianity, and are in possession of the Bible. If it is an argument for any thing, it is for an order of men called Schoolmasters, to teach men to read, and for an uncorrupt translation of the Bible, freed from all its forgeries and interpolations, to be afterwards given to those who have learned to read it.

"Had preaching been necessary before the art of printing was invented, and when few were able to read, it could be no argument for preaching in the present day, when so great a portion of mankind can read, and through

the means of printing all the rest might so easily be taught. Let us only suppose that all the thirty thousand preachers employed in this kingdom were to set about the task of teaching men to read, and we might be sure in less than two years their services might be altogether dispensed with, as every person might in that time be enabled to read the Bible.*—If preachers are so very useful, what need of Bible Societies? and why should the pious corporation of London, with the *sapient* Lord Mayor at their head, in the nineteenth century, be obliged to distribute Bibles to the poor? Either the Bible ought to be sufficient without the preachers, or the preachers without the Bible; for though many may not possess, or be able to read the Bible, yet a *provident* government has taken care that no one shall be destitute of a priest, or free from his exactions; and yet it is said, men are *still* ignorant of Christianity!"

*The following extracts from a communication in the Rhode Island *Manufactures' and Farmers' Journal*, will exhibit the views of one on this side of the Atlantic :—

"Our Saviour, at the time of his glorious ascension, commanded his Apostles to preach his word to all the nations of the earth. This was a special authority, which those who received it fulfilled by their travels and preaching,—and by the promulgation of the *Scriptures* of Divine Truth,—the first for the conversion of the then generation of men—the second for that of all future generations. These Scriptures are still extant. God acknowledges his own work, by their translation into every tongue, and their distribution to the uttermost parts of the earth. The first Apostles still preach the Gospel in those Scriptures—and who shall take away their commission? If there be any who have received a new command equal in the evidences of its Divine authority to that received by him of Tarsus, let us know and confess him an Apostle of Christ, indeed! I have seen no evidence to convince me, that since the time of the Apostles, God has issued any new command to his servants among men. The Law and the Gospel are sufficient unto salvation, and those who were appointed to declare them, have finished the work which was given them.

"The modern Missionaries in India, have done no better than their predecessors, the Jesuits. The money spent in their support has been worse than wasted; it has been productive of positive evil to those for whose benefit it was intended. Give them the Scriptures, in their own language, and we discharge our duty to them and to our Maker; for then, indeed, will the Gospel have been preached—not a Calvinist or an Arminian, a Trinitarian or Unitarian *creed*—but a Scripture of everlasting truth."

The following extract is from a *Brief Statement*, given by the Free Thinking Christians, of their rise, and the interference of the Bishop and Lord Mayor of London.

“Most of us had formerly belonged to a Baptist church, but bending our minds to the examination of the Scriptures, we observed a striking difference between the doctrines and practices of what were called Christian churches, and those taught by Jesus and his Apostles; and finding that Christianity had been wholly subverted by Popery; that every attempt to reform had been partial, and governed by party and interested motives; that the Church of England had formed her system on the same principle; and that Dissenters in general were not far removed; we concluded, that we would renounce all former opinions and practices, and simply go to the Scriptures to find the true principle on which a Christian church should be built.

“The result of our inquiries has proved, that what is now called Christianity, whether in the Establishment or among Dissenters, is as unlike that taught by Jesus and his Apostles, as Paganism ever was, and seemed to us as though it had been invented for the most corrupt purposes, or to bring Christianity into contempt. We saw that all had pretended to reform the Christian church, but none to restore it to its genuine purity; we discovered that the Christian religion was simple; that Christianity had nothing to do with the antichristian hierarchy of popes, archbishops, lord bishops, and priests, or with the order of men called preachers, it having no mysteries to explain, or public worship and ordinances to administer; but that it was the duty of individuals to exhort, admonish, and build up each other in their most holy faith; that the Christian church was one body, founded on the equality of its members, and that he who was ambitious of being the greatest, was to be the servant (not the lord and plunderer) of all; and that whoever usurped any authority over the church of God was anti-christ; whether in the cathedral or conventicle.

“We are fully persuaded that the religion of Jesus is the religion of the mind, in an entire devotedness to the will of God; that our prayers ought to be private; for they that worship the Father, must worship him in spirit

and in truth ; we therefore reject all public prayer and singing, all pulpit preaching, all observance of sabbaths, holydays, and outward ordinances, believing them to be inventions of priestcraft and popery ; and calculated to keep the multitude in ignorance, in a dependence on outward forms, to the entire neglect of the religion of the mind, and are absolutely forbidden by Jesus and his Apostles, and contrary to the spirit of his religion. *It is possible we may yet be mistaken in many points*, yet we trust our church is built on the foundation of the prophets and Apostles, Jesus the Messiah being the chief corner stone ; and as virtue, not sentiment, is the bond of our union, and the utmost freedom of inquiry is admitted and exercised, trifling, or indeed the most important, mistakes, cannot be of great consequence, as we hope, under the favour and protection of the Most High God whom we serve, by honest perseverance, finally to attain that truth, which has been only rendered difficult by the rubbish heaped on it by its pretended friends.

“ We do not condemn any for differing from us, though we freely examine their sentiments and practice ; but claiming the right of private judgment for ourselves, we presume not to deny it to others ; if their sentiments are erroneous, we pity them, and leave them to that God who is the *only lord of conscience*, and best able to appreciate the circumstances that tend to the rejection of, as well as to determine what is, truth ; we regret they do not enjoy the advantages which we think *we* do, by having what appears to us to be the truth ; but have no doubt there are virtuous characters among every religious sect ; and believe, that with God, there is no respect of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him ; that individuals will find acceptance if they have, to the best of their powers, endeavoured to know his will, but have only failed for want of opportunity of knowing better ; for in the present day, we conceive it is not he that *believeth not*, but he that with candour and sincerity, to the best of his abilities and opportunities, *examines not*, will be condemned.”

The *Free Thinking Christians* “ as distinguished from the *unthinking Christians* of the present day,” first assembled at No. 38, Old Change ; afterwards they removed

to a room at No. 5, Cateaton Street. About this time, they appear to have excited ecclesiastical attention; "For," say they, "shortly after we had removed to Cateaton Street, a gentleman, in the Bishop of London's name, made inquiries concerning us of the proprietor of the house, and on Friday, the 5th of February, the City Marshal requested our attendance at the Mansion House; and, on the next day, five of the members waited on the Lord Mayor, and were honoured with a private audience. His lordship, after taking down four of their names and places of abode, asked, where is your clergyman? To which we replied, that we had none; but met together mutually to instruct each other. His lordship, then requested to know our religious opinions. We answered, that this was a theological question, that would come with more propriety from the Bishop than his lordship; that we said not this from disrespect, nor from being ashamed of our opinions; for that the Scriptures alone were our guides in religion. His lordship said, he did not ask for information, as he had our opinions in his pocket, taking out a letter, which enclosed a list of subjects discussed at one of our meetings; and assured us, that he would not admit within his jurisdiction any religious meetings which held opinions contrary to the established religion, or in unconsecrated places; and that he should see the Bishop of London within an hour. We answered, if that was his lordship's determination, he must shut up every dissenting meeting in London; but this would be contrary to the toleration act; that as for ourselves, we did not interfere with the Church of England particularly, for we did not consider it a Christian church, but merely as a political institution; and that, not having any thing to do with politics, we of course did not trouble ourselves about that church. That the effects of persecution always aided the cause of the persecuted, and that it could not be grateful to his lordship's feelings to have his name united to those who were religious persecutors. His lordship replied, that such observations would not terrify him; that we should not meet again in public, but would recommend us to meet in private, as he must do his duty. We intreated his lordship not to act too precipitately, as our not meeting on the next day might make some dis-

turbance, as those who attended us, being ignorant of the cause, would very naturally be much disappointed, and that it was impossible for us to get either ourselves or the place certified on that day. To which Mr. Nalder, the City Marshal, replied, that there was no occasion to license ourselves, but the place, as that act licensed the speakers. His lordship then said, we should not meet again unless the place was registered, which would put it out of his jurisdiction. In answer, we requested his lordship not to consider our conduct personal to himself, or disrespectful to the civil authority, if we should act contrary to his wishes, but that we must do our duty, although we did not court persecution, and therefore should certainly meet on the next day; that the fear of fine, imprisonment, or death, should not prevent our acting up to the dictates of our consciences; that if the tendency of our opinions or practices could be shewn to create disorder, or unloose the restraints of morality and virtue, they would be readily given up by every man among us."

We are unable to give a detail of all the proceedings. On going the next day as usual to their room, they found that the City Marshal had been there the evening preceding, and that the Lord Mayor had written a letter, commanding the person to whom the house belonged, not to open the door under the pain of having the penalties inflicted, for permitting religious meetings in an uncertified place. After attending at the Quarter Sessions, and appearing before the Lord Mayor, the Recorder, the Clerk of the Peace, Alderman Combe, and Counsellor Gurney, &c. &c. they were permitted to meet together without further interruption, when such numbers attended, that crowds went away for want of room. The second time of their assembling after these proceedings, they observe;

"Amongst others who assembled, was Mr. Sibly, the short-hand writer, sent by the Lord Mayor to take down our discourses, and Mr. Nalder, the City Marshal, to judge of our orthodoxy, besides apparently many more sent to spy into the exercise of our Christian liberty, demonstrating that the great serpent, the devil, who for ages past accused our brethren, the servants of Jesus, before the throne of God, is not yet cast out; nevertheless, nothing intimidated, we were enabled with boldness to de-

clare, that after the way in which they called heresy, so we worshipped the God of our fathers."

The statement thus concludes: "As many misrepresentations of these transactions are abroad, we deem it a matter of justice to all parties, to give a simple relation of the facts, without comment. With regard to ourselves we know not what may be the intentions of Providence concerning us, but this we do know, that however dear may be the purchase, it is wisdom and duty to buy the truth, and sell it not; convinced that whoever professes to be the disciple of Jesus, and is ashamed of him, or of his authority, before men, of that person will he also be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father, attended by all his holy messengers."

In an article headed, *The Primitive Mode of promulgating Christianity, compared with modern Practice*, they observe:

"Let modern preachers meet us in print, or how they please. We accuse them of hypocrisy, of being antichristian in their practice, as perverters of the way of truth for FILTHY LUCRE'S SAKE; and we invite, we challenge them to dispute the point before assembled multitudes if they please. If after this they do not meet us fairly, we shall be satisfied that they are not only in error, but wilfully so; they are not only hypocrites, deceivers, and wolves in sheep's clothing, but the worst that can come under that denomination; and that of course it will be our duty to expose their craft and hypocrisy by all the means in our power; but if they will meet us like men and like christians, we promise them every fair advantage—they shall speak first and last, if they please: if by writing they meet us, their essays shall have place of any other. If ye refuse this challenge, Oh! ye priests, none of your hearers who read this can give you support, or look upon you as honest men, but as the grossest hypocrites and impostors, who take their money for teaching what you know to be false, and which you are afraid should be examined. But, to prevent all excuse, if you will not meet us at our own place, nor write for our Magazine, we are ready to meet you in your own, and upon any terms, so that it comes fairly before the public."

For the Reformer.

To the Editors.—Much is said from time to time in our Missionary publications, respecting the corruption of the Hindoos, and the barbarous and inhuman practice of burning widows with their deceased husbands. We are even told, that infanticide has been practised in India, from time immemorial, and that the Rajpoots, a considerable tribe of Hindoos, put all their female children to death, as soon as born. These statements are often, no doubt, highly exaggerated, and sometimes utterly false; and they are set forth, in order to excite the sympathy of the public, and raise more money for the Missionary cause.

Goldsmith, in his "*Manners and Customs of Nations*," makes no mention of this extraordinary practice of *Infanticide*; which he would be likely to have done, had such a practice existed, at least to any extent. With respect to the burning of widows, he observes: "The extraordinary custom of women burning themselves with their deceased husbands, *has fallen into disuse; nor was it ever considered a religious duty.* It rose from the enthusiasm of weak minds, who interpreted the following passage of their sacred books in favour of this barbarous rite: '*The woman who dies with her husband, shall enjoy eternal life with him in heaven.*'" He does not, like our Missionaries, charge it as authorized by their religion. With equal propriety, might the christian religion be charged with all the enthusiastic reveries, the wild and barbarous conduct of those, who have not *voluntarily sacrificed their own lives*, but what is far worse, have put to death thousands of innocent beings, and that under a pretence of doing a *christian duty*. Among those who have occasioned the death of others, under this pretence, may be reckoned John Calvin, who had Survetus burnt alive; and Bishop Cranmer and John Rogers, who first condemned Joan Beacher to be burnt alive for her *opinions*, and then extorted her death warrant from King Edward, and had her executed accordingly. A list of others might here be given, but I forbear. Now to bring forward these proceedings and charge them upon christianity, would be considered disingenuous; and why not equally uncandid, to charge upon the Hindoo religion, conduct and practices not authorized by their religion.

As deplorable as the state of the Hindoos may be, there is reason to fear, that it will not be much improved by the Missionaries sent among them. Admitting that all which is said concerning the Hindoos be true—have we any surety that they will be made better by introducing an adulterated and corrupt christianity among them. Can we not easily describe a catalogue of crimes and evils existing in christendom, where these Missionaries are manufactured, and swarm in such abundance, equal, if not exceeding those to be found in Hindostan! What slaughter and desolation too, in former times, have immediately originated from much the same corrupt anti-christian system, which is now extant, and which we are so anxious to promulgate amongst the Hindoos. Any one acquainted with ecclesiastical history, must know, that since the days of Constantine, the earth has been successively drenched with the blood of millions, through the immediate cause of what has been falsely called Christianity. A modern Protestant clergyman, speaking of the disputes, &c. amongst professing Christians, observes:

“It is not possible to describe to you the convulsions into which these disputes threw the *Christian Church*, the *anathemas* which the contending parties hurld against one another, and the *dreadful rage with which the strongest party always harrassed the weaker*. I suppose I do not exaggerate when I say, that in these controversies, *millions of human sacrifices were offered at the shrine of religious bigotry*. In truth, *ecclesiastical history in general*, is little more than a history of the worst passions of the human heart, worked up by *ecclesiastical zeal, into a diabolical virulence and madness*.”

Such are a few of the positive miseries brought upon christendom, by a corrupt system of mercenary ecclesiastics; and who can give security, that the seeds of the same dreadful disputes and collisions will not be sown among the Hindoos, if our modern Missionary pharisees succeed in establishing among them their several creeds and dogmas. The christianity inculcated by modern Missionaries, is by no means as pure and unadulterated, as that first promulgated in those countries, where such sufferings and miseries were afterwards inflicted, under

pretence of maintaining its cause. To sum up the dreadful aggregate of these sufferings and miseries, would require volumes. Millions of martyrs who have expired by devouring flames, in torture rooms, or on infernal racks, with all the most exquisite torments which the diabolical ingenuity of ecclesiastical zeal could invent, might (were they permitted,) now come forward, and declare their intolerable sufferings! not by their own voluntary choice—not by the decrees of a Nero, nor yet by the heathen or Hindoos; but by the merciless hands of that beastly power, which has presumptuously called itself the church of Christ. The sufferings and evils said to exist among the Hindoos, are no more to be compared with these, than a few drops to a plentiful shower, or a small rivulet to an overflowing stream. The *Latter Day Luminary*, in speaking of the burning of widows in India, asks the question: “In what other part of the world has fires like these *ever* been kindled, and murders like these at noon day *ever* been perpetrated?” In answer, I reply: throughout all Europe, and even in America, *more* infernal fires have been kindled, and *more* shocking cruelties and murders have been perpetrated by the contending sectaries professing christianity. Let Ecclesiastical history speak, and it will witness the fact. It is not pretended that these widows were burnt forcibly, but by their own choice. While it is well known, that the innocent sufferers in Europe and America have suffered by force.

Another source of indescribable evils and sufferings in christendom, is the practice of WAR, which is carried on under the influence of their “*Most Christian Majesties*,”—“*Defenders of the Faith*,”—Archbishops, Bishops, and all the numerous herd of Reverends. What millions of millions have been slain, by the bloody ambition of christian nations one against another! According to the account of a late author, there has been twenty-four wars between France and England in the course of seven hundred years; and two hundred and sixty years out of the seven hundred, were employed by these nations in butchering one another! “If,” says he, “we add to this account the years that these nations were employed in war with *other nations*, or in civil war in their respective dominions while at peace with each other, it will probably

appear, that they have spent more than half the time in war during the last seven hundred years. How awful must have been the amount of *carnage* and suffering! If the island of Great Britain and the whole territory of France, should now be sunk by an earthquake, the loss of lives would perhaps be less, than what has been occasioned by the voluntary and antichristian wars of the two nations. Yet, during the seven hundred years, the people of these nations have both called themselves Christians and gloried in their murderous exploits!" Yes, *called themselves*, not heathens nor Hindoos, but *Christians!!* and it is well known, that they have always been accompanied in their wars by the *clergy*, who were by no means remiss in urging their brother soldiers to *fight*, not only for their fire-sides, but for their religion.—Such are a few of the dreadful evils, which have not only baffled all the skill of doctors of Divinity, but has been absolutely made worse by the application of their poisonous nostrums. Therefore, I think it will be well to give the great Protestant Church, with all her Doctors, this good piece of advice: "*Physician heal thyself*," before thou undertakest to heal Hindostan.—Christianize thyself—cast the *beam* out of thine own eye, before thou undertakest to christianize the Hindoos—to "*renovate a world*," or cast the *mote* out of the eye of thy heathen brethren.

Certain it is, that *corrupt* Christianity is worse than nothing, and has been so considered by many of the judicious Protestant clergy themselves; who have also candidly acknowledged, that the Protestant church was extremely corrupt. To prove this, I shall make a quotation from Wesley, which is only one testimony out of many, which might be adduced. "How is it," says he, "that the wisdom and goodness of God suffers the antidote (the gospel) itself, to be so *grievously adulterated*, not only in *Catholic countries*, but in almost *every part* of the Christian world? So adulterated by its being mixed frequently with useless, frequently with poisonous ingredients, that it retains *none*, or at least very little of original virtue. Yea, it is so *thoroughly adulterated* by many of *those very persons sent to administer it*, that it ADDS TEN-FOLD MALIGNITY to the disease which it was designed to

cure ! in consequence of this, there is little mercy or truth among Christians or Pagans. Nay, it has been affirmed, and I am afraid truly, that many called *Christians* are far *worse* than the *Heathens* that surround them : *more profligate, more abandoned to all manner of wickedness—neither fearing God nor regarding men.*” If this is the state of the professing world, which the most discerning among themselves have acknowledged, is it not the height of madness and folly, for them to be at so much pains to spread the dreadful contagion ! If the very persons sent to administer the gospel, absolutely add *ten-fold malignity* to the depravity which already abounds, and many called Christians are *far worse* than the heathen themselves, “*more profligate, more abandoned to all manner of wickedness,*” what but an infernal agency can induce them to minister the monstrous poison ? If they were not blinded by selfish and mercenary motives, would they not feel more concerned about their own deplorable condition ? would they pretend such wonderful anxiety to fly to the relief of the heathen, while they themselves, together with millions in their own land, are under “tenfold” worse maladies ! I think not ; I believe they would first seek to be cured of their own disease. But as long as the people give *money* to the clergy, just so long will their eyes be blinded to their own condition, and just so long will they blind the eyes of the people ;—they will go on “*deceiving and being deceived.*” But let the people of this country withhold their money entirely from such speculating blind guides, and let none pretend to dispense the word of God, except such as do it without money and without price ; and we shall soon see things alter for the better. We shall soon see priest-craft, together with persecuting contentions about religion, hide their detestable heads. *True Christianity* will arise, increase, and spread its lovely influence in this favoured land, and a corrupt, malignant and mercenary system, which has been forged in the dark reign of antichrist, will vanish like a scroll.

PHILOTHEOS.

“The slightest observation of human nature,” says Mr. Fuller, “must convince us, that the greater part of mankind, even in religious matters, are governed by fashion : they go with the course of this world.”

Propagation of Christianity in India, by different sects.

A writer, in remarking upon the petitions before the British parliament in 1813, from divers religious sects, to be at liberty to go and teach the people under the government of the East India Company in India, observes:—

“If these petitions were granted, it must, of course, be with a view of giving *effect* to the prayers of the petitioners; and, can it possibly enter into the head of any wise legislator, to lay, thus, the foundation of everlasting divisions and feuds in a country, for which he has to make laws? It is one thing to *tolerate* these several sects, in a country, where they *already exist*; but to *create* such divisions is quite another thing.—

“What is to become of the souls of the Hindostanians, who have heretofore died, if a belief in Christianity be necessary to the salvation of those who are now alive, and of those hereafter to be born, is a question which I must leave to theologians to settle. But if Christianity be necessary to the Hindostanians *now*, and that it is so the petitioners assert, will any man say, that, before missionaries are sent to convert them, it ought not to be *settled*, *what Christianity is*? It is well known, that the sects, which have petitioned parliament, differ as widely from one another in their belief as it is possible for men to differ. The Calvinists will tell their hearers, that it was decreed, by an all-powerful being, before they were born, that they should either go to heaven, or to hell; and, that, though it was so decreed, their going to hell, if they do go thither, *will be their own fault*.—The preachers of free-will will tell their hearers (who may be the same persons,) that this doctrine was hatched in the brain of a morose, savage, treacherous, tyrannical, bloody-minded man of Geneva, who seems to have fashioned his God after his own image, and cursed with the same disposition and passions.—The Protestants will tell the Hindostanians, that the Catholics are idolators, and the Catholics will tell them that the Protestants are *heretics*. The Catholics will tell them, that they act under the authority of the Pope, who is God’s vice-gerent upon earth; and the Protestants will tell them that this Pope is no other than a poor decrepit old man, and withal, not much better than a cheat.—The Churchmen will teach them that Bishops derive their office from

those men whom Christ himself set over his people; and Presbyterians will declare to them, with equal positiveness, that this office is a remnant of the trappings of the old scarlet harlot of Babylon. ***

“Now, reader, I put it to your good sense, whether any member of parliament, in his sober senses, can reconcile it to his conscience to let loose such a scourge upon a people? I, for my part, would as soon consent to let loose upon them, if I could have the power, all the plagues of Egypt.—I should say to these petitioners, before I let you go to India to teach Christianity, let me see that you are of *one mind* as to what you propose to teach. First agree among yourselves as to *what Christianity is*; and then I may let you go on the work of conversion.—Aye, say they, but we all agree as to the *morality* of the Christian system. Gentlemen, you cannot separate the morality from the dogmas; and while the Hindoos hear you abusing each other; accusing each other of folly, and of deception; while they hear you, who are all come to them upon the same errand, calling each other all manner of vile names, is it probable, nay, is it possible that they will listen to your morality, even supposing it to be better than that which they now have amongst them?

“I have thus stated, in plain terms, my objections to granting the prayer of these petitioners. I do not know precisely what is the religion or what is the morality of the inhabitants of Hindostan; but, I am quite sure, that they can never be mended by sending amongst them missionaries from these numerous hostile sects, who would be more anxious to defeat each other than to overcome any injurious prejudices that they might find existing in the country.—Missionaries from some *one* sect might *possibly* do good; but, from them all, mischief of some sort must be the consequence. I feel no interest at all in the matter as it affects our political power, thinking the possession of India to be an injury to England; but, in addition to all the rest that we have done to that unoffending people, I do hope that we shall not sow the seeds of everlasting religious discord.—I want to see no laws passed to put down by force any of these sects in England; but, as I said before, it is one thing to *tolerate*, and another to *create*, a nuisance.”

SPANISH INQUISITION.

In a table extracted from a late history of this dreadful tribunal, by J. A. Lorente, one of its late secretaries, a detailed list is given of the respective numbers who have suffered various kinds of punishment and persecution in the Peninsula alone, independent of those who have been its victims in other parts of the world, for a period of three hundred and fifty-six years, viz. from 1452 to 1808, during which the Inquisition has existed, under the administration of 44 Inquisitors General. Within that term it appears that in Spain have been burnt 31,718, died in prison or escaped by flight and were burnt in effigy 174,111, and suffered other punishments, such as whipping, imprisonment, &c. 287,522, making a grand total of 336,651. The greatest number of victims under any administration, was in that of Torquemado, the first Inquisitor General, who presided from 1452 to 1499, a long and bloody reign of 47 years, during which 8,800 victims were burnt, 6,400 died or escaped by flight, and 90,094 suffered various other punishments; being in the whole 105,294, or 2,240 per annum!

“Had I added, (says the author,) to the number of victims of the Inquisition in the Peninsula, those who suffered under their judgments in Mexico, Lima, and Cartagena, in Sicily, Sardinia, Oran and Malta, and those who were condemned to the sea galleys, then indeed the amount would be incalculable.—And what if we included (which we should be justified in doing) among the victims of the Holy Office, those who were plunged into misery by the violent attempts made to introduce it in Naples, Milan and Flanders!—How many too might be added who had perished by sickness, the consequence of the punishment of infamy, which even their relations shared with them!—it would be impossible to put a limit to the extent of so much misery and wretchedness.”

CHURCH PROPERTY.

On the subject of a decision of the Supreme Court, with respect to some property belonging to the Episcopal church in Vermont, the editors of the *Theological Repository*, at Washington, observe:

“Had the same justice been done to the Church in the state of Virginia, as will, by this event, be done to that

of Vermont, we should not now be under the painful necessity of witnessing so many of her temples deserted, and her parishes, from time to time, vacated, for the want of a suitable provision for the support of her Ministers.

“The Apostle declares, that ‘they who preach the gospel should live by the gospel,’ and that ‘the labourer is worthy of his hire.’ But, in very few instances, is there an adequate compensation allowed to those who devote themselves to the high and holy calling of the Ministry of reconciliation.

“The desecration of the property of the church of Virginia, which as justly belonged to it as does that claimed by any private individual, was, by the sale of the Glebes, a violation of the constitutional rights of the Church, and a direct attack upon the interest and prosperity of the Redeemer’s kingdom, and will, no doubt, demand at the hands of those who were instrumental in accomplishing this unhallowed object, a serious and awful account when they come to stand at the judgment bar of Heaven.”

Just such a belief is entertained, no doubt, by the Catholic priests in Old Spain, with regard to the CORTES, for confiscating the property of the Inquisition, and disposing of the enormous estates of the Church in that country. These Repertory men take a very high stand. Not long since, the President of the United States, and the heads of Department, at Washington, were handled with great severity for not coming to worship at their “sanctuaries,” and now the former legislators of Virginia are turned over to a “serious and awful account at the judgment bar of Heaven,” for not exercising a fostering care towards the interests of a corrupt priesthood, who were inimical to the rights and liberties of the people of this country, and violent persecutors of all who were preachers of righteousness.

Perhaps no legislative acts were ever more beneficial to the “interest and prosperity of the Redeemer’s kingdom,” than those which took away the 16,000 pounds of tobacco, per annum, fixed upon each Episcopal clergyman, and determined the sale of the Glebes. Under the ministry of the Episcopal clergy at that time, the morals of the people were in a very low state, and religion existed only in form, while the annual revenue of 16,000 weight of tobacco, and the Glebes, served to perpetuate this or-

der of corrupt and lordly priests, and prevent any change from taking place for the better. Accounting *gain* to be *godliness*, they were violent in their opposition to every other sect, and all who presumed to preach without receiving ordination from a Bishop in England, were whipped, persecuted, or imprisoned. After their emoluments were taken away, dissenting preachers were allowed to preach without being molested, and as those of the Methodist and Baptist persuasions were at that time pious and faithful, they were instrumental in producing a very great reformation in the habits and morals of the people.

Extracts from a communication in the Boston Recorder, of May 31st, headed 'Support of the Gospel Ministry.'

“Much has been written of late upon the urgent call for labourers in the Lord’s vineyard. It has been often stated, that one minister is wanted for every 1000 souls in our own land, and that, to furnish this supply of competent religious teachers, 7000 are now wanted. But though the people greatly need the instructions of faithful and able ministers, equal in number to more than one to every 1000 souls; yet but a small part of this number could obtain support. People are so divided in sentiment, and generally have so little sense of the value of a preached gospel, and of their obligation to contribute for the support of the ministry, that comparatively few destitute places would support evangelical ministers, could they be obtained. Much pains have been taken to discredit the great doctrines of the gospel, and destroy the influence of those who preach them, and also to persuade people that the gospel ought to be preached freely, and that they are under no obligation to contribute for the support of the ministry. And the event has shown that multitudes have learned with facility sentiments so congenial to the covetous feelings of their hearts. Many, therefore, are unwilling to do any thing for the support of the gospel. And others, who grudgingly give something, think it thrown away, or lost. And this, I conceive, is one main reason that there is such a want of ministers. When the people, in the time of Nehemiah, neglected to bring in the tithes, the Levites fled to their fields, and the house of God was forsaken. Did people duly prize the gospel,

and were they willing to contribute, as they ought, for its support, God would furnish them with pastors, and would not suffer them to remain 'as sheep without a shepherd.'

"Ought not greater efforts to be made to *support* ministers, as well as educate them? The friends of religion must be brought to feel more deeply upon the subject. Those in destitute places and regions must be willing to make far greater efforts and sacrifices, than they have yet made.

"If people were willing to give as much for the support of religious teachers as God's ancient people were required to give, nine families could support a minister. But nearly all, who are suffering 'a famine of hearing the word of the Lord,' will probably say, they are not able to do this, and will rather starve than do it. It would, they think, make them poor; but were God's professing people, under the former dispensation, ever impoverished by 'bringing in all the tithes into the store-houses?' It is unbelief, which leads people to suppose that if they 'honour the Lord with their substance,' and support his institutions, it will make them poor."

The foregoing extracts exhibit the doleful tone of many of the clergy in New England, and show how they sigh for an establishment, so as to be able to compel the people to pay them according to their wishes. They, no doubt, consider themselves the Lord's heritage, like the Levites of old; and that the people, in order to have the Lord's blessing, ought to bring all the tithes into the store-houses, so that there may be an abundance for them to fatten upon, and to live in splendour and ease. If all hireling priests in this country would migrate to Rome, where they originated, it would be a great blessing to the land, and a benefit to the cause of true christianity among us. As a body, what our Saviour said to the Scribes and Pharisees, will fitly apply to them: "*Ye shut up the kingdom of Heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering, to go in.*"

For the Reformer.

To "serve two masters," appears to have been a favourite study with the Scribes and Pharisees of old; and although the impossibility of the case had been clearly

proved to the *Doctors* of the Jewish *visible church*, and the record of that decision has passed down to the *Doctors* of the *Gentile visible church* of our day, yet they seem to pursue the same course, and with equal success—both appear to have had the same objects in view—both wished to gain the admiration of men, with its attendant—*good living*—and both will have enjoyed the same kind of reward.

I was led to this train of thought, by reading in your last number the account and remarks on the *recreative excursion* of the new *College faculty*, of Washington, after a laborious “session of eight days”—probably in consultations and discussions on the best mode of manufacturing Rev’d’s and D. D’s,* and “ways and means” of raising and establishing funds to secure their present “fast footing,” and the future aggrandizement of themselves and their successors.

It has become quite the fashion for Rev’d’s and D. D’s to put their sons, grandsons, &c. to “the Ministry.” I have heard of several such instances, and of one where no less than three sons follow their father’s profession—this is what some would call *hereditary*.

It seems that Washington is in a fair way to become what Jerusalem once was, and Rome still is—the seat of “religious fashions” and “pious frauds.” I have before me a newspaper from which I copy—“The city of Washington is improving fast; a large number of private houses are going up; streets are opening; the markets improve; a superb city hall is to be erected immediately; three additional churches are building; a theatre is under contract. They have now four elegant bridges over the Potomac.”†

* The public are not permitted to know the cost of a D. D’s **DIPLOMA** (for life) at one of those colleges; but the stated prices of a *life membership* of a Missionary, a Bible, or other incorporate society, could not well be concealed, if it were merely in complaisance to the ladies, who are now the principal *payees* for “their beloved Pastors.”

† Those *elegant bridges* will be very convenient to the people on the other side the river to go either to one of the *new churches*, to the theatre, or to both, and that perhaps on the same day—theatres being opened on nights only; and this one, we may suppose, sufficiently spacious to accommodate, not only the three congregations, but also, the two great bodies and attendants, besides visitors

It is probable that this *newspaper puff* was "got up" ere their college scheme had been fully matured, or we should have had, in addition, something like—"A splendid Baptist college edifice is also under contemplation."

A LAYMAN.

For the Reformer.

The American Bible Society, which met in May last, have published their annual pamphlet, consisting of 34 pages, close print, and which they distribute gratis.* In this pamphlet we shall find several addresses, votes of thanks to their president, vice-presidents, secretaries, and other officers, and speeches by the individuals whose names they bear, and delivered in the order, as they were appointed to be spoken or "read off."†

Those speeches were, no doubt, *got up* with great labour and care, at least, the long ones—and but for some localities of the matter, difference in the scale of titles, and (as should have been expected,) a national variation

of all descriptions, from the Capitol; and thus the *bridges* may be said to lead to *church*—the church to the *theatre*, and the theatre to *paganism*.

* *Quere?* Whence the money to defray this (no inconsiderable) expense of printing and spreading this book of addresses and speeches, made by the officers and managers of this society, complimenting and praising each other, on this periodical occasion?—Does the money come from the purses of the individuals who enjoy the honours of making speeches and having them appear in print before the public, or comes it from the grand fund of the society?—Should it ever happen that the clergy become a majority of the trustees, will they not have it in their power to *act over* the scenes at Serampore, by claiming the sole right of themselves and their successors to the vast funds of the society?

‡ "JOSEPH C. HORNBLOWER, [there is some appropriateness in the name,] Esq.—Since the meeting of the society this morning, your committee of arrangement have politely given me an invitation to bear a part in the exercises of this interesting day. A variety of considerations at once suggested to me that I ought to decline the unexpected and proffered honour, and yield the place I now occupy to talents more worthy of the occasion. * * I could not resist the opportunity afforded me, of lifting my feeble voice, and publicly testifying * * * for sir, if not utterly a stranger to the feelings of my own heart, I would rather have my name inscribed on your minutes * * * than on the brightest records of political fame, and mere human glory."

of style, the whole may be said to be a monotonous† echo and re-echo of the complimentary speeches made by the royal highness's—the most noble's—most reverend's—right reverend's—D. D's—M. D's, &c's, at the meetings of the bible society at London—but as a particular review has been commenced of the most prominent speeches and intended for the next Reformer, the curious will have time to examine the speeches for themselves; but for the sake of readers at a distance from our cities, who cannot procure copies, a few short extracts, for the present, are herewith given, (by way of notes.) A LAYMAN.

† The *novel*, I should have said, the *revived comment* on the two WITNESSES, insisted on by the aged “Dr. Woodhull,” p. 4 & 5, ought also to have been excepted: He supposes the two witnesses to be *the old and new testament*.—The speaker proceeds, p. 5 & 6, —“In this eventful period, the British and Foreign Bible Society stands pre-eminent in majesty and usefulness:—a society, which we delight to honour, and desire to imitate. Shall we compare it to a morning star, leading on a glorious gospel day? or to a sun [with the Duke of York at its head,] blessing the world with rays of gospel light?—It presents to this society a bright example. Although the natural world might not endure two suns, the religious world would rejoice in beholding, not *only* two, but two hundred such, mingling their beams, and filling the world with the light of the glorious gospel.”—*Quere?* Which case is most lamentable—to be without the bible, or, having it, to live and act contrary to its precepts?—In closing, he thus speaks of himself—“He who now addresses you will probably do it no more—one whose head is whitened with the frosts of 80 winters, and who has labored 55 years in the vineyard, may well conclude, that he has almost finished his course, and may be taking leave of this world, of the church, and its useful institutions.”—*Quere?* Are these the *institutions of the world or of the church?*

AN ADMIRABLE INSTANCE OF ROYAL MUNIFICENCE, AND
BROTHERLY LOVE.

His majesty, the supreme head of the church of England, and his holiness, the Pope of Rome, “ARE ONE.”

The following extraordinary article is copied in the London Times of July 21, from the French newspapers:—

“ROME.

“General Lord William Bentick, according to our journals, having been presented to his holiness the Pope, addressed him as follows—

“Great Monarch of Rome, and of the two Legations! My Sovereign affectionately felicitates you, and, as a proof of his regard, sends you this bill of exchange, [it was a blank, having only the signature of the British Sovereign,] leaving it to you to insert the sum for which you have occasion towards the establishment of your dominions.”

"His holiness could not abstain from testifying his admiration and gratitude; he was for a moment unable to speak. Could it be? a king of England, to the Pope, the chief of the Catholic Apostolic Roman Church! At last his holiness thus replied, with his eyes full of tears,—

"Illustrious General! present from me the most lively thanks to your king, and tell him that I will never cease to implore the Almighty to reward his majesty's love for the church, and that God may pour all his blessings on the English nation."

[*Lond. Evan. Mag. Vol. XXII. p. 361. 1814.*]

[*From a Correspondent in Geauga County, Ohio.*]

"I cannot forbear expressing the satisfaction I derived on perusing your May number of the Reformer, to find my favourite maxim reduced to practice. *Religion* without priests, as well as priests without *religion*, has long been my motto. I hope to hear more of it. While I am speaking on these subjects, perhaps it may not be amiss to drop a few hints on a point, which I do not recollect to have ever heard discussed, and which has occasioned me to marvel not a little, that those who have so faithfully and successfully wrought against the pyramid of priestcraft and superstition, should never have aimed a blow at one of the main pillars in the edifice: I mean the custom of sermonizing and addressing mourners at funerals; a custom, perhaps little practised, except among our Puritans of New England, and their descendants. I do not recollect any Scripture authority for such practice, nor did I ever see any good result from it: on the contrary, when the mind is deeply wounded, the feelings lacerated and exquisitely alive, instead of administering comfort, or pouring the balm of Gilead into the wounded spirit, the moment is seized, by means of pathetic addresses to the feelings, at a time when the judgment is known to be absent, to place the sectarian foot on the neck of the prostrate sufferer; and when by this unfair and unfeeling management the victim is ground to dust, they raise a *te deum*, and say he has gained religion. If they had said the priest has gained a proselyte, it would have been much nearer the truth. Besides, the discourses, which are always mingled with sectarianism, are meant to have, and do have a powerful and deluding effect upon the hearers, who are not always able to detect the motive.—If people can once be persuaded, that they cannot come into the world and receive a given name without a priest, nor live in the world without a priest, nor yet die and be decently interred without a priest, we are then compleatly tenants at the will of the Clergy. So strong is the force of habit and the influence of education, that this is perhaps the last shred of the badge of servility which will be abandoned."

[*Extract of a letter from Green County, Ohio.*]

"The impositions practised by missionaries, and the advocates of religious splendour and pageantry, in the western country, are becoming topics of common conversation among the best informed; and I have no doubt but the day is not far distant, when this species of *Clerical swindling* will be viewed in the same light with the *other kinds* of counterfeiting and impostures, which are now punishable by statute.

"The statement relative to the Maumee mission, is correct—I was there myself: and I have no doubt as to the truth of the Boonsville *speculation*. Some other frauds of the same kind are now passing under my observation, (and that too at the expense of government, in the Sandusky country;) and I shall not fail to communicate with you on the subject, as soon as the facts are sufficiently developed."

Samuel Mervin, Presiding Elder of New-Haven District, in a letter to the editors of the *Methodist Magazine*, dated Jan. 16, 1823, states: "In consequence of the *imposition* practised upon the people in this quarter, in respect to *education and missionary societies*, I found very strong prejudices existing against missionary societies in any shape, or for any purpose." Since this letter was written, the Legislature of Connecticut have passed an act, prohibiting collections from being taken up in churches for Missionary purposes. *Lyman Beecher* and his partisans, in that state, must have drawn the cord too tight, and are on the wane. Public opinion, we apprehend, ere long will put an end to *Missionary begging*, and stop the rage for making more priests, without the aid of legislative acts. People already begin to see, that a numerous priesthood will only prove a burden and a curse, and overturn the liberties of the country. And if the religion of Jesus Christ was ever dishonoured and disgraced, it has been by missionary begging, and the schemes for raising money, which have been set on foot by the clergy of the present day. In these matters, they have entirely overdone the business and exhausted the patience of the people; and it will, in the end, create a disgust against them and break down their influence—particularly, as they have no warrant from the New Testament for raising money to propagate the Christian religion. It is imposition throughout—and after ages will determine it to be so.

The *Baptist General Convention* has appointed the celebrated *Luther Rice*, a general Agent, to obtain collections and donations, and form societies, to remove the present embarrassments of the Theological department of the *Columbian College*. It would be rather difficult to decide whether *Luther Rice* or *Mr. Frey*, the converted Jew, are the greatest adepts in this kind of employment. They are both very successful in relieving the pockets of those who fall in their train.

It appears from the Report of the last Annual Missionary Meeting at the South Sea Islands, that the Missionaries have obtained from the natives at *Tahiti* and *Eimeo*, the past year, for their Missionary fund 12,055 bamboos of oil, 36 pigs, 267 balls of arrow root, and 191 baskets of cotton-wool.

It is stated in an English newspaper, that the king of Prussia has prohibited all private assemblies for prayer and reading the Bible, and that the nocturnal meetings of the *Moravians* are also forbidden. "The preachers of that sect are not allowed to go in future from one congregation to another." Political motives are said to have occasioned these unjustifiable measures.

A letter from *Lausanne, France*, states:—"A pastor of one of our villages, being charged with having organized and presided at *Methodist* meetings, has been deposed and forbidden to preach."

[From the *National Intelligencer* of May 24th.]

Whatever may be said or thought of the Mission of *Mr. Frey* into the Southern States, to collect money to convert the Jews, the most prejudiced must, after perusing the following, allow him the credit of methodical arrangement and uncommon industry:

From the *Augusta (Geo.) Chronicle*.

Mr. Frey intends with the leave of Divine Providence, to pursue the following rout, and it might prove beneficial to the interests of this important mission, if editors would give publicity to the appointments within their respective districts.

In May—On the 4th, at *Salisbury, North Carolina*; 5th, at *Salem*; 7th, at *Hawfield and Cross Road Church*, and in the evening at *Hillsborough*; 9th, *Oxford*; 11th, *Prince Edward's*; 13th, *Lynchburg*; 15th, *New London*; 16th, *Liberty*;

18th, Fincastle; 19th, Petersburg; 20th, High Bridge Meeting House; 21st, Falling Spring; 22d, New Monmouth Church; 23d, Rev. Mr. Davidson's Church; 25th, Lexington; 26th, Timber Ridge Church; 27th, Fairfield Church; 28th, New Providence; 29th, Bethel Church; 30th, Staunton. In June—On the 1st, at Augusta Church; 2d, Harrisburg; 3d, Woodstock; 4th, Winchester; 5th, Williamsport; 6th, Hagerstown; 8th, Fredericktown; 10th, Gettysburg; 11th, Chambersburg; 12th, Chippersburg and Carlisle; 15th, Harrisburg; 16th, Litiny; 17th, Reading; 18th, Bethlehem; 19th, Nazareth and Easton; 20th, Hacketstown; 22d, Mendham and Morristown; and on the 23d, at New York.

[Our friend and correspondent who favoured us with the above, informs us he was very lately from Fincastle, and that Mr. Frey's sermon there produced him 47 subscribers, who have engaged to give a dollar each yearly. Such contributions will be sure to make Jewish converts, and to awaken the zeal of others to enter into the Missionary cause.]

[From the Independent Examiner of June 14th.]

We are informed, by a late arrival from England, that an uncommon Religious Society had just sprung up in the metropolis, and that a Mr. Owen is labouring with great success in establishing their religious sentiments among "the villages in Ireland." The most prominent features of their system appears to be, the total abandonment of the Priestly Order; and that the preachers are neither to exact, or receive, any Money for their labours. This is laying the axe to the root of Simony; for it seems to have been the main intention of all sectarian leaders, to make provisions for a numerous clergy, either by reviving the Jewish ordinance of tithes, or an equivalent in money, besides their pay for extra services—such as marrying, &c. just as gentlemen of the Long Robe, or those of *Materia Medica*, are paid for theirs, and well paid too. How unlike the first preachers of the gospel.

SALE OF PEWS.

Sixty nine pews were sold at auction June 2d in St. Andrew's Church, erected by the Episcopalians in this city, for twenty-two thousand five hundred and fifty-two dollars. The highest pew sold for seven hundred and fifteen dollars.—Fifteen additional pews have been since disposed of, which brought three thousand one hundred and ninety one dollars.

It has been stated, that among the purchasers of pews in this "Fashionable Church," were two citizens among the foremost and most extravagant purchasers who were both members of a church, to which each is in arrears for a Year's Pew Rent! and the non-payment of which they excused by the complaint of the times!

A sale of pews took place in the New Presbyterian Church, in Arch street, June 11th, when twenty-two pews were disposed of, which brought twelve thousand dollars. The highest price given for a pew was seven hundred and fifty-five dollars. There was to be another public sale of pews in this church on the 16th of June, the amount of which we have not learned.—It is stated in one of our city papers, that "the estimate of the cost of the lot and building, including the steeple, an ornamental iron railing in front, and the walls round the property, together with a fine organ, and all the interior decorations, falls short of forty-three thousand dollars. The estimate of the pews, at a low valuation, is forty-five thousand dollars, that of the ground twenty thousand."

That man is entitled to our pity who can suppose that such merchandising, or rather such profanations will always be kept up under the name of christianity and religious worship.

* Cyril, and paragraphs from a Layman, are necessarily delayed till our next.

WM. and JOSEPH MAROT, back of 93 Market-street, have accepted the Agency of this work. Any letters or remittances, however, sent to the former Agent and Printer, will be punctually attended to; and when more convenient, subscribers may enter their names there, pay their subscriptions, and receive the numbers. Communications and letters, in order to receive more immediate attention, may be directed to T. R. GATES, Proprietor and principal Editor, No. 299, North Third-street.

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